

It's a year round job.

And here in the Congress, it's something we've been working at for decades.

When I first came to Washington in the 1970s, many of the whistleblower laws we take for granted today didn't exist at all.

Anybody who dared to blow the whistle back then was about as welcome as a skunk at a picnic.

Of course the real skunks were usually there among the crowd trying to build a scare, chase the whistleblower away, and destroy their reputation.

That's still true today.

But now it's a lot harder for those people to get off the hook.

That's because whistleblowers today have a lot more protections than they did years ago, and they have important advocates in their corner, such as the IG community, who are there to support them.

And when they don't, I call them out for it.

You may have heard that I recently recommended that President Biden fire FHFA IG Laura Wertheimer.

Last month, the IG decided to resign effective July 31st.

It's unusual for me to ask the President to fire an IG. In fact, you may recall that in past years, I've written letters to Presidents Obama and Trump when they fired IGs without providing reasons to Congress as required by law.

But this was a clear cut case.

I started investigating IG Wertheimer years ago.

Whistleblowers were the ones who first brought concerns about the IG to my attention.

They said she was abusing her staff, making fun of them for things like their weight and medical disabilities.

She was even retaliating against some of the whistleblowers who spoke to my office.

After I saw just how bad things were, I asked the Inspector General Community's Integrity Committee to conduct their own investigation.

They validated many of the whistleblowers' claims and called for her to be removed.

Earlier this month, there was concern that the IG's Chief Counsel, who was found to have obstructed the Integrity Committee's investigation and was recommended for disciplinary action, could become the new Acting IG.

So I wrote to President Biden, urging him to appoint a qualified individual for the Acting IG position and swiftly nominate a permanent replacement who will respect their staff and protect whistleblowers the way they are supposed to as an IG, instead of retaliating against them.

My ongoing work to support whistleblowers also involves new legislation.

One bill that we passed recently involves the Commodity Futures Trading Commission Whistleblower Program.

Since that program was created, whistleblowers in the commodities industry have been coming forward in unprecedented numbers to report fraud and abuse.

We reached a point within the last year where the upcoming awards were so large, the fund was in danger of not having enough cash on-hand to pay whistleblower office staff.

My CFTC Fund Management Act, which passed the Congress in June, now allows the Commission to set aside money in a separate account to ensure that staff are paid and this highly successful whistleblower office can remain open.

I also have several other bipartisan whistleblower bills I intend to pass this congress.

I'm working on legislation that will strengthen incentives and protections for

whistleblowers who report potential money laundering, as well as whistleblower protections for FBI employees.

And I have bills to further strengthen the False Claims Act and Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act.

So, as much as we've accomplished together, there's still more to be done.

In closing, I want to thank you all for the role you play in bringing attention to whistleblower issues and advocating on behalf of whistleblowers.

Your service in support of whistleblower issues is a service to our country and all the ideals of good government that I've spent my career working to promote.

So please go forward and continue doing the good work that you've been doing all along.

Together, let's make sure the whistleblower laws and protections we have in place next year and the year after are even stronger than the ones we have in place today.

Thank you.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, were I present during the vote today on H.R. 3237, as amended, I would have vote yea.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO RICK SHANKLIN

• Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, July 31, 2021, marks the retirement of Rick Shanklin, whose remarkable career with the National Weather Service spans several decades.

Though Rick hails from a small farming community near Hopkinsville in Christian County, most of his career has been spent at the NWS office in Paducah, KY, where he was the warning coordination meteorologist.

He has served at all three National Weather Service operations in Kentucky, has been a forecaster, worked with countless tornado drills and national assessment teams, and pursued his passion for operational readiness and public severe weather preparedness, earning many honors along the way from the Department of Commerce, various Governors throughout the region, and the Commonwealth of Kentucky's Division of Emergency Management.

Rick is also credited with championing the development of Kentucky's "Mesonet," a network of over 70 automated weather monitoring stations, hosted by Western Kentucky University, that is a model for other States.

It turns out that Rick is something of a celebrity among those who share his passion for the science and technology of predicting and preparing for the very dynamic weather conditions of the Commonwealth. His fans, local leaders, and county emergency managers will miss his regular updates and his steady, thorough engagement during critical weather events.

Most importantly, it would be difficult to calculate the lives saved and property losses mitigated by the work

that Rick has performed during his career. I am proud to recognize him for his considerable contribution to the safety of Kentuckians and to families throughout the region.●

RECOGNIZING THREE BOYS FARM DISTILLERY

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Kentucky small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize Three Boys Farm Distillery in Graefenburg, KY, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 2011, Ross and Heather Caldwell moved their family from Colorado to Kentucky, and quickly pursued their dream of opening a distillery. Before moving to Kentucky, Ross and Heather purchased a 122-acre farm providing them a space to open a distillery, and have remaining land to graze cattle and grow corn for use in their single barrel bourbon and whiskey. Like many small business owners, the journey to open their business was no easy task, as Ross and Heather navigated redtape and burdensome regulations before getting their business off the ground. After many hurdles, Three Boys Farm Distillery opened its doors in 2013, named in tribute to the Caldwells' triplets: Patrick, Andrew, and Ethan. Over the years, family has remained the foundation of this small business with Ross serving as master distiller, but growth has led to hiring nine additional employees, including another master distiller.

Today, Three Boys Farm Distillery is renowned for its bourbon and rye whiskey. Their products are sold throughout the United States and have drawn praise nationwide. The distillery's bourbon and whiskey tastings are a hit among Kentuckians and tour groups alike, drawing visitors from around the United States and abroad. Uniquely, Three Boys Farm Distillery allows guests to sample and bottle their own whiskey and bourbon straight from the barrel. Over the years, Three Boys Farm Distillery has also become a popular event venue for weddings and family reunions. Additionally, the distillery supports other local artisans and small businesses by selling their goods at the distillery's on-site gift shop.

Like many small businesses, Three Boys Farm Distillery was faced with challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic but overcame them by adapting their business model throughout the ever-changing government regulations. The distillery expanded their shipping operations to provide long-time consumers access to their products and relied on the recommendations from their loyal customers to grow their customer base when distillery tours and tastings were prohibited. Furthermore, Three Boys Farm